

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00
HA-05 /104 W

-----123492 061455Z /43

P R 061430Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2411
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: REACTIONS TO AIRCRASH SURVIVOR MASSACRE

REF: PRETORIA 5191

1. INTERNAL NATIONALIST REACTION TO THE RHODESIAN AIR CRASH
MASSACRE HAS BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY CONDEMNATORY. UANC SPOKESMAN
IS QUOTED IN PRESS ACCOUNT AS SAYING "WE ARE, OF COURSE,
HORRIFIED AT THE WHOLE IDEA OF INNOCENT PEOPLE BEING
SLAUGHTERED. IT IS NONSENSE FOR JOSHUA NKOMO TO CLAIM ON THE ONE
HAND THAT HE SHOT DOWN THE VISCOUNT AND THEN SAY HE DID NOT KILL
THE SURVIVORS. IT WAS A SENSELESS ACT." A ZANU (S) SPOKESMAN
REPORTEDLY SAID HIS PARTY HAD "RELIABLE INFORMATION" THAT
NKOMO'S ZIPRA DID THE KILLING. HE ADDED "THE KILLING OF
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INNOCENT PEOPLE IS ALWAYS HORRIFYING, WHETHER THEY ARE BLACK
OR WHITE. IT IS ABOMINABLE." ZUPO CHIEF CHIRAU'S REACTION WAS
REPORTEDLY THAT, IF A GROUP BASED OUTSIDE RHODESIA SHOT THE
PLANE DOWN, THEN IT WAS "AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT."

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORT YET OF OFFICIAL RHODESIAN
GOVERNMENT REACTION. PRESS ACCOUNTS SAY THE RHODESIAN AIRLINES

GENERAL MANAGER DISMISSED NKOMO'S REPORTED CLAIM TO HAVE SHOT DOWN THE AIRCRAFT AS "A DOWNRIGHT DELIBERATE LIE." HE SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST "HOSTILE ACTION" HAD BEEN INVOLVED.

3. IN SOUTH AFRICA, DEFENSE MINISTER BOTHA REPORTEDLY CHALLENGED THE WORLD TO TAKE A STAND ON THE INCIDENT AND SAY "THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER...PEOPLE WHO SPEAK CONTINUOUSLY ABOUT HUMANISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY EXACTLY WHERE THEY STAND." MEMBERS OF SA OPPOSITION PARTIES PFP AND SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY ARE QUOTED AS CONDEMNING THE ACT. SAP LEADER JOHN WILEY SAID HE WAS REVULSED BY THESE LEADERS "THE WESTERN NATIONS WISHED TO BRING TO POWER IN A FRIENDLY NEIGHBORING STATE" AND ASKED FOR "DECISIVE MILITARY ACTION" AGAINST NKOMO, MUGABE AND NUJOMA BECAUSE "NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEM ARE MERELY APPEASEMENT OF MONSTERS. BISHOP DESMOND TUTU, SPEAKING FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, ALSO REPORTEDLY CONDEMNED THE "BRUTAL" SLAYINGS.

4. COMMENT: IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE BLACK RHODESIAN LEADERS HAVE SO QUICKLY BLAMED NKOMO FOR THE INCIDENT AND CONDEMNED IT WHILE THE RHODESIAN FRONT, I.E., SMITH, HAS APPARENTLY REMAINED PUBLICLY SILENT. THE EAGERNESS TO BLAME AND CONDEMN NKOMO CONTRASTS WITH THE REACTIONS OF THE INTERNAL BLACK LEADERS TO THE ELIM MASSACRE IN JUNE WHEN THEY VOCIFEROUSLY CONDEMNED THE EVENT BUT DID NOT DWELL ON THE IDENTITY OF THE PERPETRATORS. EDMONDSON
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT, MASSACRES, DEATHS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR05226
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780362-1254
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780998/aaaadcqv.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3776fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 PRETORIA 5191
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1531150
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: REACTIONS TO AIRCRASH SURVIVOR MASSACRE
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3776fa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014